

BILLERICA HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
May 7, 2025

A meeting of the Billerica Historic District Commission was held on Wednesday May 7, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall, in room 210 and via Zoom. This meeting is recorded.

Present: David Gagliardi, Chairman; Mary McBride, Secretary; John McKenna, Member; Michael Rea, Member; George Simolaris, Member; Dan Valentine, Alt Member; Katherine Malgieri, Town Planner and Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk

Via Zoom: Richard Hawes, Member; and Mary Jones, Alt Member

Excused: Travis Brown, Vice Chairman; and Kathy Meagher, Alt Member

Absent: Tina Pesiridis, Alt Member

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Gagliardi called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Gagliardi asked for a roll call of HDC members present.

John McKenna – Present
Richard Hawes (Zoom) – Present
George Simolaris – Present
Mary Jones (Zoom) – Present
Dan Valentine – Present
Mary McBride – Present
Michael Rea – Present
Dave Gagliardi - Present

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Tom Lincoln, Middlesex Association – Would like to know why the Talbot Dam application is being continued to the June meeting. The Chair asked him to raise his hand when we hear Article 3.

APPLICATIONS:

1 Treble Cove Road – Minor - App #2025-04 – Owner John McBride and Joel Perry, Graphics Unlimited

Applicant is seeking approval for replacement signage and other improvements to the front of their existing commercial building. They would like to modernize while keeping the historic feel. The sign is brushed aluminum with black lettering, with black Sunbrella awnings and flower boxes.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. There was concern with lighting being too bright. The lighting would be par 20 illumination based on projection. What is the material of the awnings? It is a Sunbrella material, it is acrylic that is made for outdoors, water and mildew resistant. There was some concern about the aluminum not reflecting the history of the neighborhood. Would the aluminum cast reflection from headlights. A wood sign was suggested and

what about porcelain signs are they still used? However, others like the brushed aluminum and thought it would be great for safety reasons since the building has been hit by vehicles a few times. The light fixtures might be too much; do you need so many? How much light will they cast? The actual lighting can be worked on/adjusted; the gooseneck light fixtures are more for aesthetics with trying to keep with a historic look.

John McKenna, seconded by Mary McBride, made a motion to approve minor Application #2025-04.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 6-2:

Mike Rea – Aye
John McKenna - Aye
Richard Hawes – Nay
Mary McBride - Aye
Dan Valentine – Aye
George Simolaris - Aye
Mary Jones - Nay
David Gagliardi – Aye

420 Boston Road – Minor - App #2025-05 – Michael O'Regan, Owner of Big Iron Tattoo

Applicant is seeking approval for installation of new signage to the existing commercial building. Mr. O'Regan showed a couple of designs which are the same as the other shop owners. He will be carving the sign himself.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. The discussion revolved around the color of the sign and if it should have one line or two. The consensus is a white sign with black lettering and two lines. The LED lights inside the shop were mentioned. Mr. O'Regan did speak with the Town Building Commissioner about what appear to be fluorescent lights. His lights are inside the store, not in the window. The need to be inside at least 24 inches inside in order not to be considered window signage. These are 36 inches and thus are compliant with the Town's Sign ByLaw.

John McKenna, seconded by Dan Valentine, made a motion to approve minor Application #2025-05.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 8-0:

Mike Rea – Aye
John McKenna - Aye
Richard Hawes – Aye
Mary McBride - Aye
Dan Valentine – Aye
George Simolaris - Aye
Mary Jones - Aye
David Gagliardi – Aye

Talbot Dam Removal – Major – App #2025-01

The proponent requested a Continuance until June 4, 2025, in order to get their application and anything else needed to present their case. It was recently discovered that the HDC Standards have some conflicting areas of information, and a dam is not specially mentioned in the Standards. There is a box on the application that can be checked for "Hardship". Jill Griffiths with Gomez and Sullivan Engineers and Susie Bresney, Restoration Specialist with the MA Div. of Ecological Restoration, Dam Removal Program contributed to the discussion.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. Mr. Lincoln from the Middlesex Canal Associate believes if Summit Pond is allowed to be destroyed, it would be a huge loss for Billerica. He was very confused by the issue with the application and now being brought forth as a hardship. Ms. Griffiths and Ms. Bresney had questions for the committee about the areas of conflict within the HDC ByLaws and Standards. Are there any environmental hardships? No. The burden of proof of hardship is on the owner, they would need to provide proof of a financial, maintenance, or other reasons for wanting to destroy the dam. Tori Labate, Assistant General Counsel for the MA Department of Fish and Game was on via Zoom and spoke about what they hope to have completed by the next meeting so the committee can finally vote on this.

John McKenna, seconded by George Simolaris, made a motion to approve the continuance of Application 2025-01 to the June 4, 2025, HDC meeting.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 8-0:

Mike Rea – Aye
John McKenna - Aye
Richard Hawes – Aye
Mary McBride - Aye
Dan Valentine – Aye
George Simolaris - Aye
Mary Jones - Aye
David Gagliardi – Aye

OTHER BUSINESS:

Miscellaneous Correspondence: None

ADJOURNMENT:

George Simolaris, seconded by Mary McBride, made a motion to adjourn.

It was voted:

8 – In favor
0 – Opposed

Chairman Gagliardi adjourned the meeting at 8:04 pm.

Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk